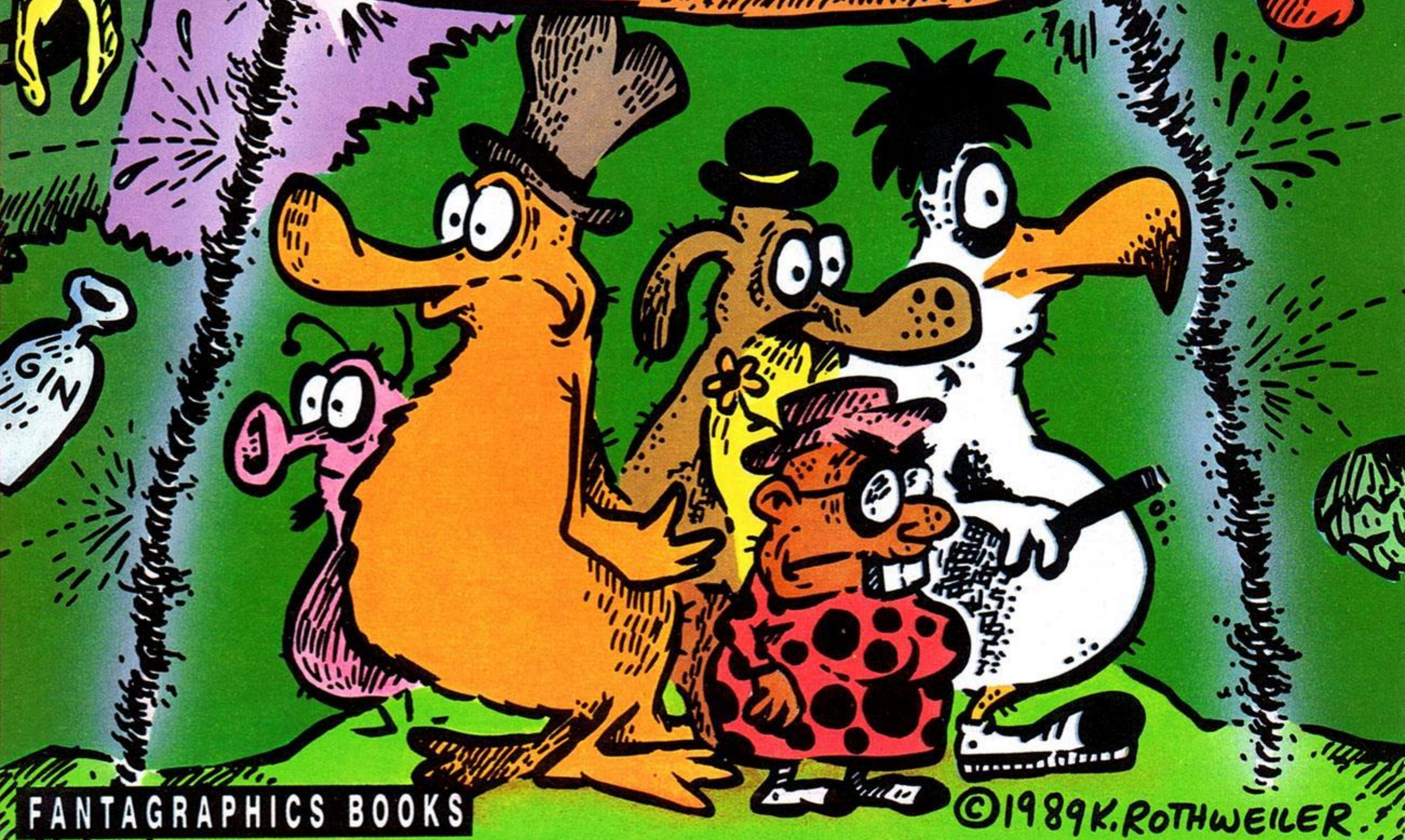
DUCK BILL PLATYPUS

CRITTERS
No. 41
$2.00
($2.50 in Canada)

STRATEGIC DONUT INITIATIVE



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

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CRITTERS LETTERS

Send to: 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115

This time, just to be different, let's start off with a couple of letters from Critters *contributors.* —*KIM THOMPSON*

Dear Kim,

A brief reply to Eric Blumrich, who writes in *Critters* #39 that the "serious" funny animal comics transcend the humorous Disneyesque stuff; actually, it was Disney himself who invented the "serious" funny animal, as a movie gimmick, at least as far back as *Bambi*. The kind of sentimental hokum used in that picture was almost never employed in the Disney organization's comic books, and for good reason—Disney, who had an unerring instinct for how the popular media worked, seemed to understand that film is a "hot" medium, comics a "cold" one, and that the kind of cheap emotional tricks the movies pull off so effortlessly seem like a load of crap in the comics—something which most people in the funnybook business have not figured out to this day.

Kyle Rothweiler
Bozeman, MT

● *It's also worth pointing out, I suppose, that* Bambi*'s animals are not anthropomorphic per se, just caricatured. (They do not, for one thing, have hands.) But I'm going to sit out this dramatic-vs.-humorous-funny-animals debate; it's getting too hot for me.*
—*KT*

Dear Kim,

I'm sorry to see the *Critters* anthology format ending, but what an issue to go out with (#38)!

I realize there will be an upcoming anthology issue as in the past, but have you also considered doing issues devoted to a single character but done by different artists? For example, Tom Stazer could write a three-part Lionheart story with him drawing the first chapter, myself doing the second, and someone else doing the finale. Or you could have three separate short Lionheart stories completely done by different artists (all approved by Tom, of course). I've used Tom as an example because he and I have talked about doing a collaboration someday and also because I admire his work and would love to draw a Lionheart story.

The "Alumnus Update" was a nice addition but I'd like to add to William Van Horn's credits. He's written and/or illustrated a number of wonderful children's books including *Twitchtoe the Beastfinder, The Big Sneeze* (which features some very familiar-looking dinosaurs), *This Is the Place for Me*, and *Hank and Frank Fix Up the House*. Van Horn fans (and I count myself among them) should really look for these books.

Cheers,

Stan Sakai
Pasadena, CA

● *A nifty thought, Stan. Tom? And thanks for the Van Horn recommendations—I knew Bill had been doing* something *other than comics all these years, but I never had a clear idea what. (Incidentally, issue #45 of* Critters *will be an all-Ambrose issue. . .everyone remember Bill's vaudeville frog?)* —*KT*

Dear Kim,

Usually "Fission Chicken" is the funniest feature in *Critters*, but I think J.P. Morgan's "Toilets of Terror" (#38) was totally absurd. Sure, it's fun to read wacky stories like these, but I'd rather see our feathered friend pounding "Marketing Experts From Beyond" rather than monstrous toilet bowls! Anyway, "The Homogenization Ray" (#39) was a better story. I like the Vortoxian characters and the Tortoises were a treat to see.

It's been about a year since I started buying *Critters* and I have most of the issues. The art is what attracted me to the comic. Actually, all the artists' styles are satisfying in their own ways. I do have my personal favorites, namely Timothy Fuller, Steve Gallacci, William Van Horn, and Mike Kazaleh (can't wait for the "Herman and Janet" issue).

Critters has also influenced my own funny-animal work. Here is a drawing of my vixen character.

David DuPerre
Jacksonville, IL

● *David sent another letter in which he asked how he could get copies of* Albedo *(send $2.50 to Thoughts and Images, P.O. Box 19419, Seattle, WA 98109 and you should get a sample issue) and whether there will be any "double-issues" of* Critters *(yes; issue #50, most likely). J.P. Morgan says he's sorry and promises not to be totally absurd again.*
--*KT*

[See "LETTERS," page 23]

FEATURING

Not much is known about Kyle Rothweiler, man of mystery, whose **"Duck 'Bill' Platypus"** introduced him to readers across the nation in *Critters* #34-37, so we're filling up this space with a rejected version of the cover to this issue (done before we'd decided to ditch the *Critters* logo). Nice. . . but we think the one we ended up with is better. Thanks to Mike Kazaleh for inking the logo, and to Tom Luth for collaborating on the cover coloring.

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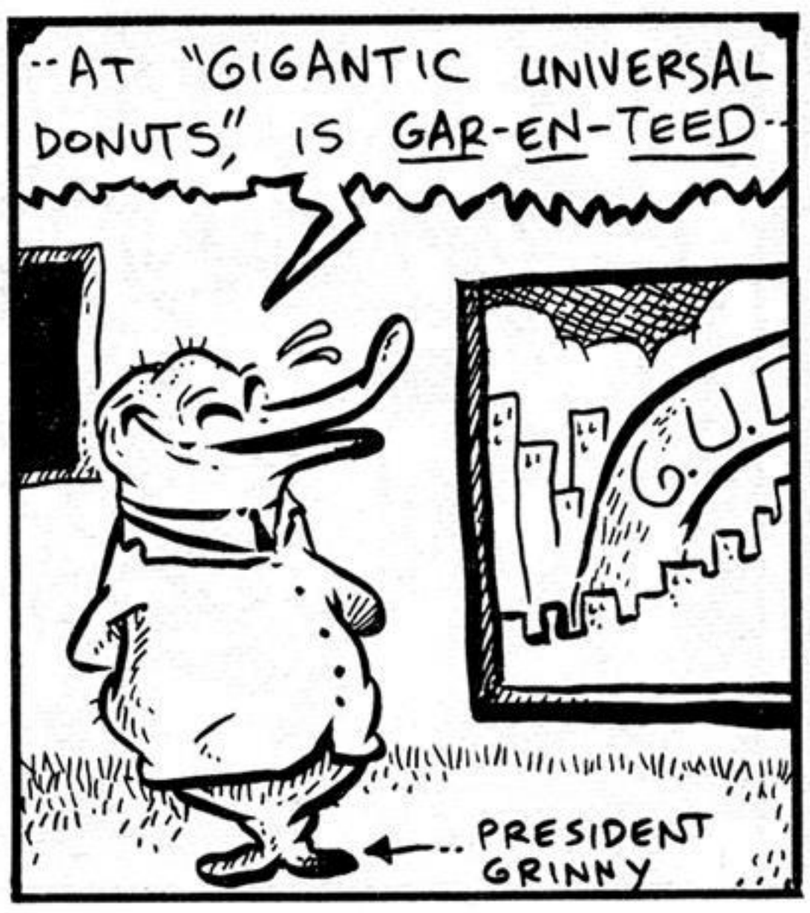
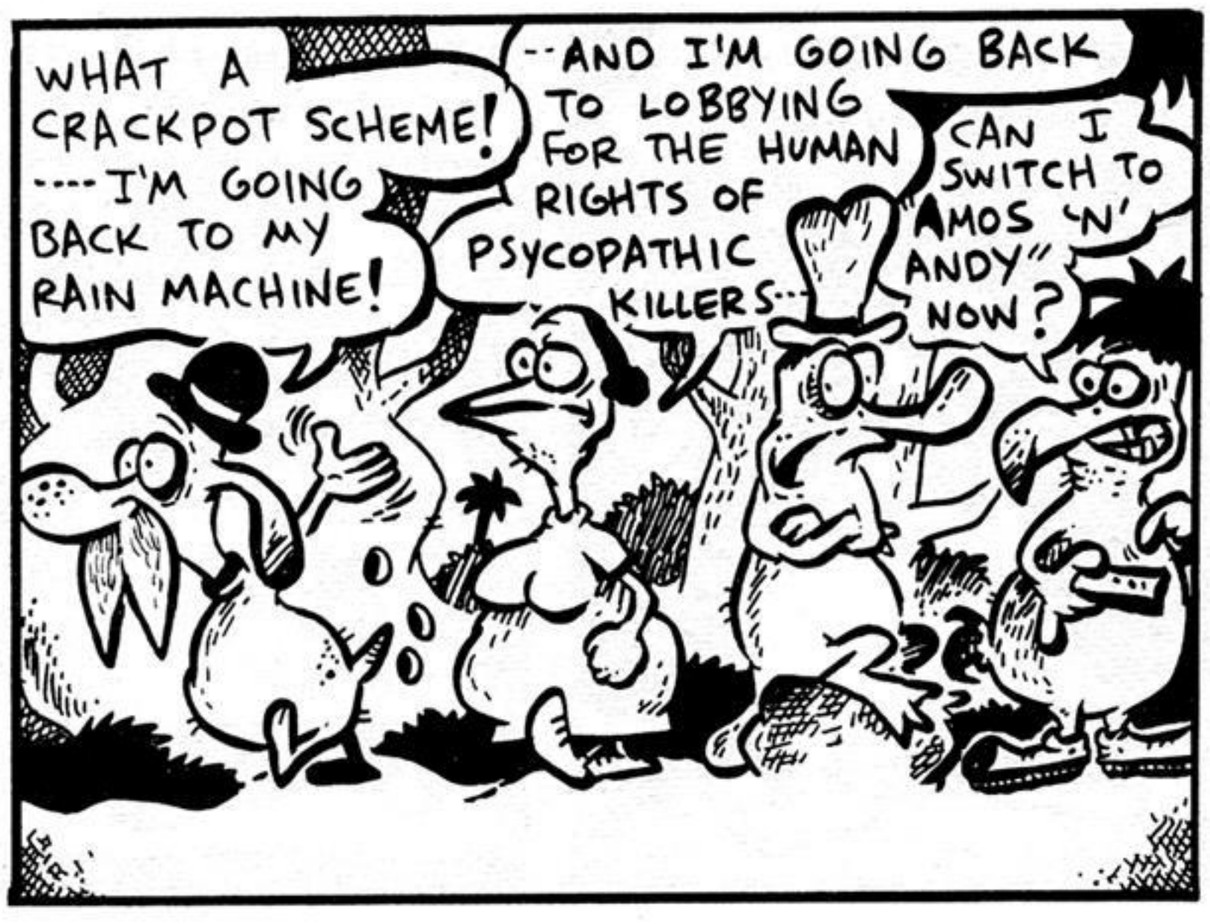
DUCK "BILL" PLATYPUS in "A THOUSAND POINTS OF PINHEADS"

---MY FELLOW TASMANIANS, TODAY WE LAUNCH THE S.D.I.* SYSTEM, WHICH WILL ABSOLETELY ENSURE OUR FUTURE SECURITY------

OBLIGATORY T.V. WATCHING SCENE

*STRATEGIC DONUT INITIATIVE





I'M SURE GRINNY KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOIN'----------
SO DID TED BUNDY---
CLICK

WHERE'D YOU GIT THE STUPID TOOP, DUPE?
WHY, YOU DIRTY LITTLE---
FRANK FRANK, FRANK

THE BIGGER THEY ARE---
--THE WIGGIER THEY ARE!

CHIRP CH--URP-- CHIRP.....
---BEATIN' THE MEAT AGAIN---

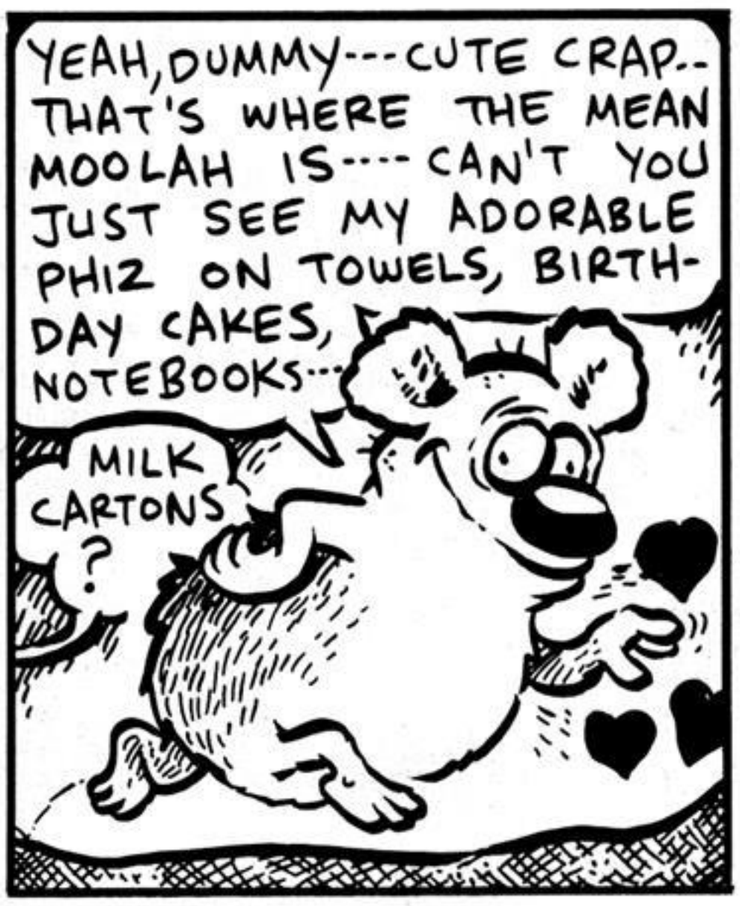
--- I GUESS I'LL GO PURSUE MY HOBBY, DONUT-GAZING!
GIT AWAY FROM THAT T.V. SET, YOU BUMP-BACKED BLASTO-CYST---
CRUNCH--
SPWINCHOSAURUS

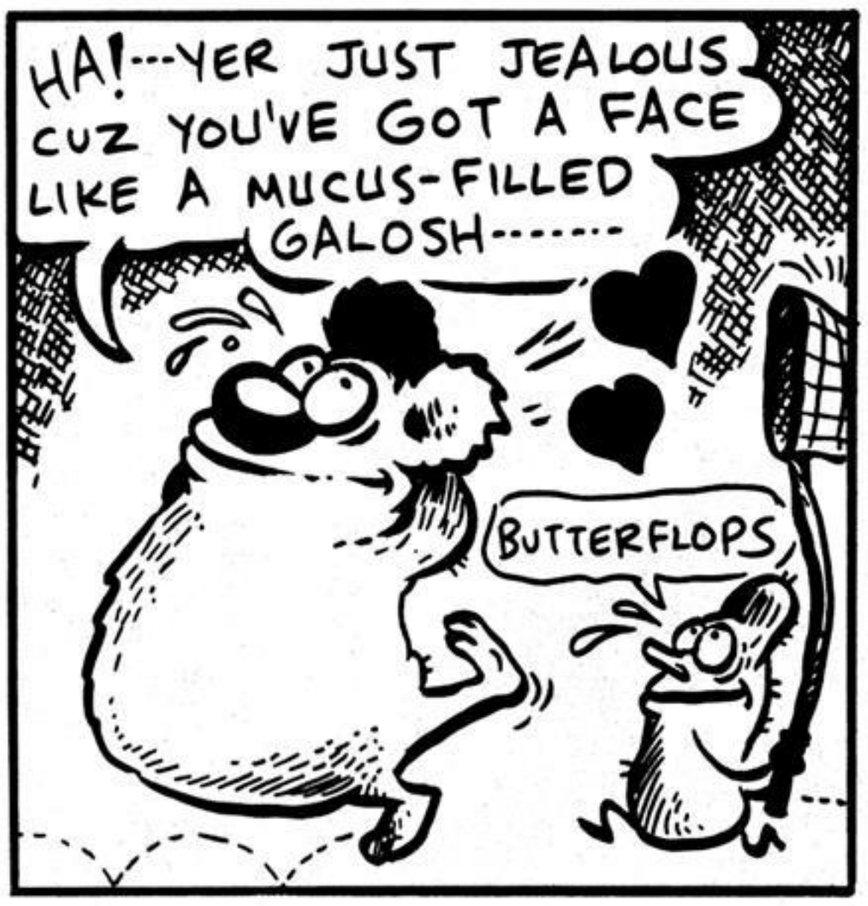
DRAT!--NOTHING OUT TODAY BUT FLYING SAUCERS---

KEE-RACK
ZOINK

WYNCHA WATCH WHERE YER GOIN', YOU NASAL NONENTITY
WHAT'S EATIN' YOU?

YER WRECKIN' MY CUTENESS EXERCISES, YA @★ϟ MORON---
CUTE-NESS EXER-CISES?


YEAH, DUMMY---CUTE CRAP-- THAT'S WHERE THE MEAN MOOLAH IS---- CAN'T YOU JUST SEE MY ADORABLE PHIZ ON TOWELS, BIRTH-DAY CAKES, NOTEBOOKS---
MILK CARTONS?


HA!---YER JUST JEALOUS CUZ YOU'VE GOT A FACE LIKE A MUCUS-FILLED GALOSH-------
BUTTERFLOPS

LE'GO, YOU EXTINCT SPECIES... I WANNA WATCH PILL PHONIHOO--

?

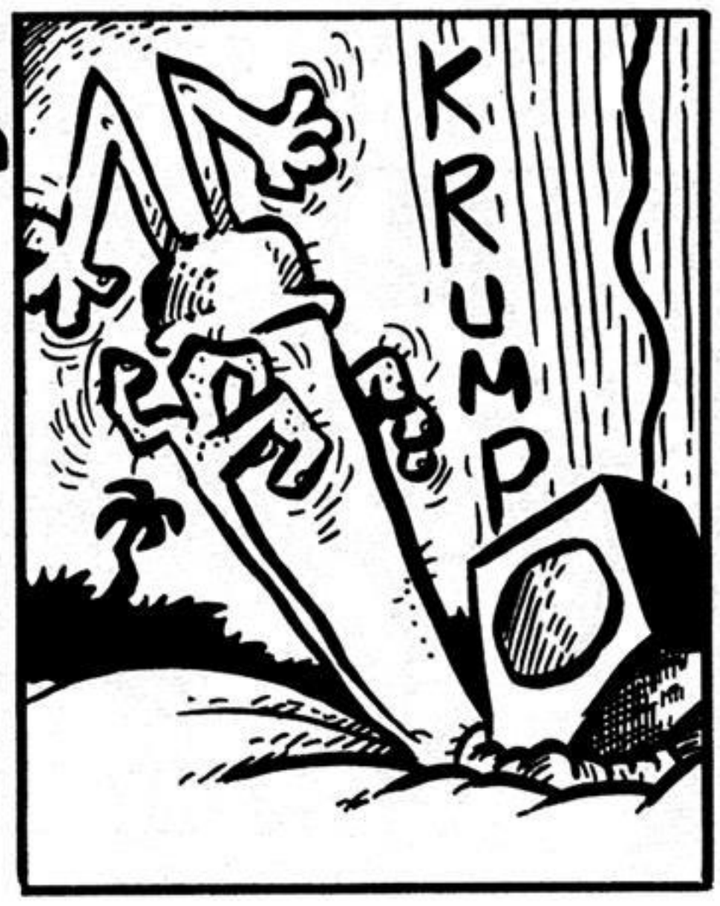
THIS IS STRICTLY TOP-SECRET, OF COURSE, BUT I WAS INVOLVED IN LEVITATING THE S.D.I. SATELLITE INTO ORBIT-----
NO KIDDIN'?
MY!

COULD YOU GIVE US A DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR POWERS?
OUT OF THE QUESTION---- NATIONAL SECURITY, YOU KNOW---
---BUT WE'LL PAY!

O.K.---- GORK! SPWINK! LA-FONG!
SNATCH

PWALB!

POL-DONK-----
FWINK!
glort


KRUMP

SEE? I LEVITATED THIS STRAIGHT DOWN------

IF I'M GONNA GIT A GOOD DELUGE OF FISH, I BETTER GO HEAVY ON THIS "CLOUD SEED"----
EAT
DOWN TIME

---SPIKED WITH FISH FERTILIZER (MY OWN SPECIAL BLEND)----
GAGH---
---I SUPPOSE THAT @★& DONUT WILL SCREW UP THE METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS---
ZGONK
BARE OMETER
WHATTAYA LOOKIN' FER, PAL?
FISH CLOUD
FISH CLOUD?
FISH CLOUD!
EAT COW-BURGERS
How ABOUT THAT ONE?
NO--NO--NO---
--IT'S GOTTA BE PREG-NANT WITH THE PO-TENTIALITY OF PIS-CATORIAL PRECIP-ITATION!
HUH?
MADE FROM MANGLED MOO-MOO MEAT
I GOTTA PROVE I'M RIGHT, D'YA UNDERSTOOD?---- IT'S THIS ICHTELEOGICAL ITCH---
IT'S MAD-DEN-ING!
EASY, BUDDY--- THAT'S GENUINE COW-HIDE---
I'M OBSESSED I TELL YA---DRIVEN!--- ALL THIS CAFFEINE COURSING THROUGH MY VEINS!
I MUST LOOK INTO THE BLOODSHOT EYE OF GOD OR BUST A GUT TRYING!
A BOLD-FISH GOAL LIKE THAT IS A BAFFLEMENT TO THE BOVINE BRAIN---
CUD PLUG
COW BURGER
MEANWHILST--
TOINK
UKH
RUNNING GAG
HALT
SKEEEK
WHAT'S YER PROLLEM, LADY?
YOU WERE TRYING TO VIOLATE THAT WIENIE'S RIGHTS!

WIENIES HAVE NO RIGHTS, YOU FEMININNY!
ALL OF OUR MOTHER NATURE'S WEE ONES HAVE RIGHTS!
WELL, IN THAT CASE---
KEEP OFF THE GRASS
OH, YOU HEARTLESS BRUTE---
YOU INSENSITIVE
O.K.---SO I'M INSENSITIVE--- LET'S SEE HOW SENSITIVE THE WIENIE IS----
HOW CAN YOU KILL SOMETHING WITH SUCH BIG BROWN EYES?
WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING?
NOTHING---YOU TWINKLE-BEAKED GEEK!
TOINK
--IS "PILL PHONIHOO" BROADCASTING LIVE FROM TIERRA DEL GUANO
OUR SUBJECT TODAY IS "DONUTHOLISM" AND OUR GUEST IS "McQUEEN BUTTERFLY" WHO HAS WRITTEN A BOOK ABOUT THIS TRAGIC DISEASE, "DANCING TOWARD THE LIGHT AT THE OTHER END OF THE DONUT HOLE"---
CATCHY TITLE!
YOU'RE A BORN-AGAIN CHRYSALIS, IS THAT CORRECT?
THAT'S RIGHT, PILL---
A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER-DAY DONUT?
YES---
---AND YET YOU'VE WRITTEN THIS BOOK, --I MEAN TRASHING DONUTS---NOW, ISN'T THERE SOME SORT OF CONTRADICTION HERE?---HELP ME OUT ON THIS----
THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL QUESTION, PILL----
--AND SURE IT'S A CONTRADICTION--THAT'S WHAT'S BEAUTIFUL ABOUT IT---IT PROVES THAT MY FAITH IS PURE-- THAT'S WHY IT SELLS-------
UH-HUH I SEE---
TOO MUCH TALK!

I'M SICK OF GROWN-UP GUM-FLAPPING! I WANT DIRTY DEEDS, NOT WARTY WORDS---

--ON THIS GULLIBLE GLOBE, CUTENESS IS POWER--VIZ., I MUST EXERCISE MY POWER TO CONTROL ALL THAT MOVES---

HMM--- SOMETHING MOVING DOWN THERE---

Y'SEE, THE ORBIT ON SOME OF THESE SPUTNIKS IS STARTING TO DECAY---
IS THAT WHAT I SMELL?

SUPPOSE ONE A THOSE BABIES BUSTS LOOSE AND CRASHES DOWN ON YOUR UNSUSPECTING SKULL--?--- YOU CAN SUE---

--- BUT WHAT GOOD ARE 5 MILLION RUBLES GONNA DO YA?---YOU NEED COVERAGE!-------
YEAH!-- LET'S GIT UNDER A TREE----

---THIS EUCALITMUS THING LOOKS SAFE---

NOW THEN--- WHERE WERE WE?

GRUNCH

WHAT A GREAT MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION THE TLIBE IS!

---GOOD THING I HAD THE HELMET ON---
HEY!---WUSS GOIN' ON HERE---DID HE STEAL DAT T.V. SET?

NO---Y'SEE THE ORBIT ON SOME OF THIS HARD-WARE IS STARTING TO DECAY, AND----
YOU 'SPECT ME TO B'LIEVE THAT CROCK OF SHINOLA?
SPONG
I'LL GITCHA FER THAT, YOU LITTLE CREEP!
ARE YOU HARASSING THAT CUTE LITTLE BEAR, MR. MACHO APE?
HE AIN'T NO CUTE LITTLE BEAR ---HE'S A KOALA-BLOODED KILLER---
HE'S UP THERE DROPPING HOUSE-HOLD APPLIANCES ON PEOPLE---
POOR LITTLE GUY-- HE'S A VICTIM OF TECHNOLOGICAL CONSUMERISM!
BLAME THOSE PINHEADS AT G.E.!
YOU TELL 'IM, LADY!
G.E.
TAKE YOUR MEDICINE, YOU SISSY SAUSAGE---
WANT SOME MORE A MY DROPPINGS? HAHAHAHAHA
WHY, YOU CHEESY CHEATER---
I AM SOMEBODY!
TOINK
I AM A WINNER!
BONG
OH---- I THOUGHT HE SAID "WIENER"!

I HOPE THE POOR THING WORKS AFTER CRASHING INTO YOUR BONY BEAN----
CLICK

I'D JUST LIKE TO OFFER MY PRAYERS TO ALL VICTIMS OF THE DONUT CURSE--
SNORF

THEY AREN'T EVIL--- MUCH---THEY'RE JUST SICK---ALL THEY NEED IS TO GET PROFESSIONAL THERAPY---OR AT LEAST TO READ MY BOOK---
JEEPERS H. CRUST

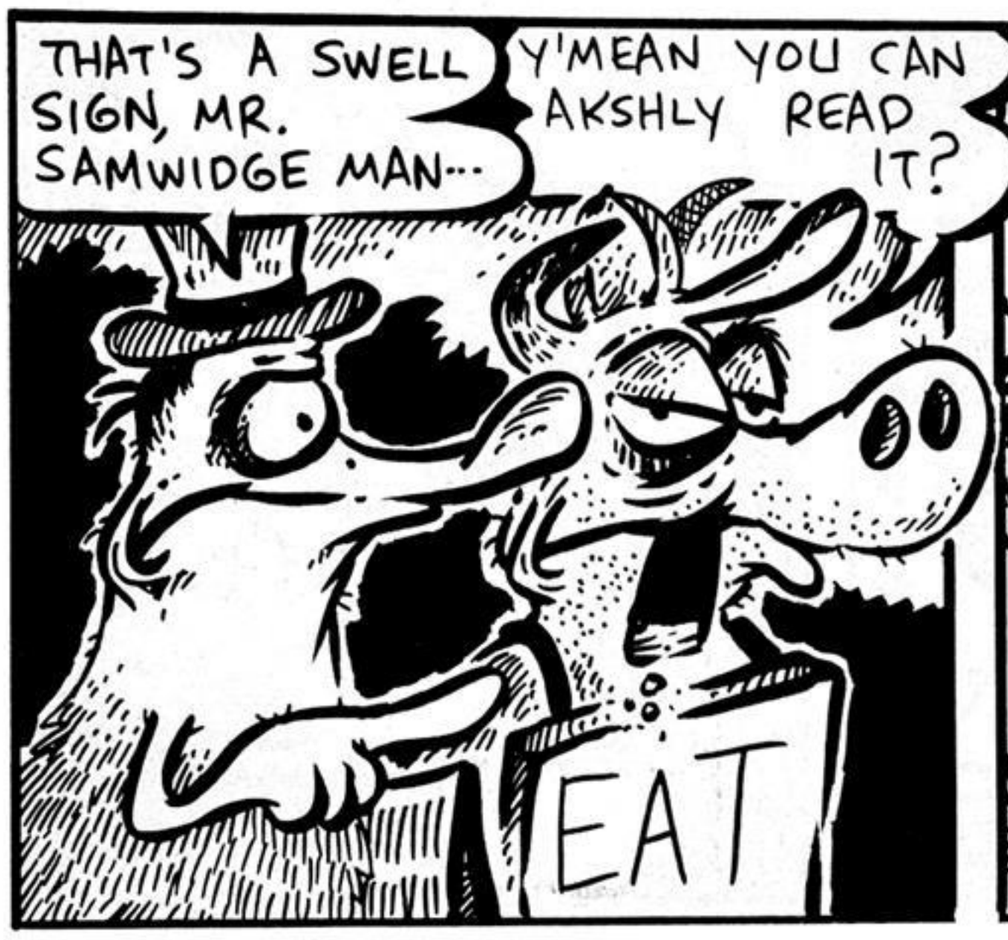
THAT FANCIED-UP BEDBUG IS A PUBLIC PEST!----
SOMEBODY SHOULD PULL HIS LEGS OFF----
CLAP CLAP CLAP
KETCHUP
BEAN SOUP
GRAVY

"DONUTS ARE ETERNAL DELIGHT"--ELSE WHY WOULD GOOD OLD GRINNY HAVE SUBSIDIZED THE BIG ONE?
Y'KNOW

---I WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN LEVITATING IT OFF INTO SPACE---
TOO BAD YOU HAVEN'T BEEN INSTRUMENTAL----
---IN PAYING OFF YER BILL AT THE DINER--

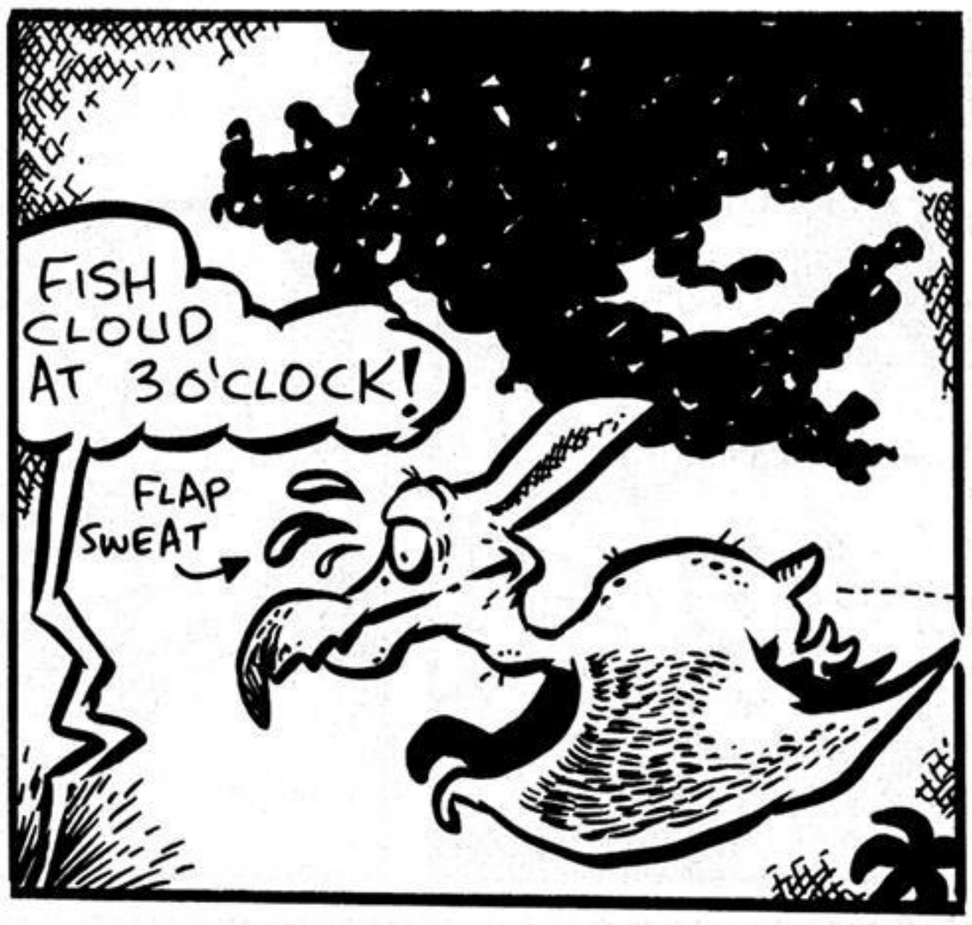
SAY---IT SAYS HERE IN THE "WEEKLY WORLD NUISANCE"--- "ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO FAKE")--
SEPIA-TONED SUMAC
TWO-EADED BIGFOOT
YES YES?
EAT COW-BURGERS
M-MM

IT SAYS HERE THAT THE DINOSAURS REALLY HAD HAIR!
HAR--- OH, MOO-MOO DOO-DOO!

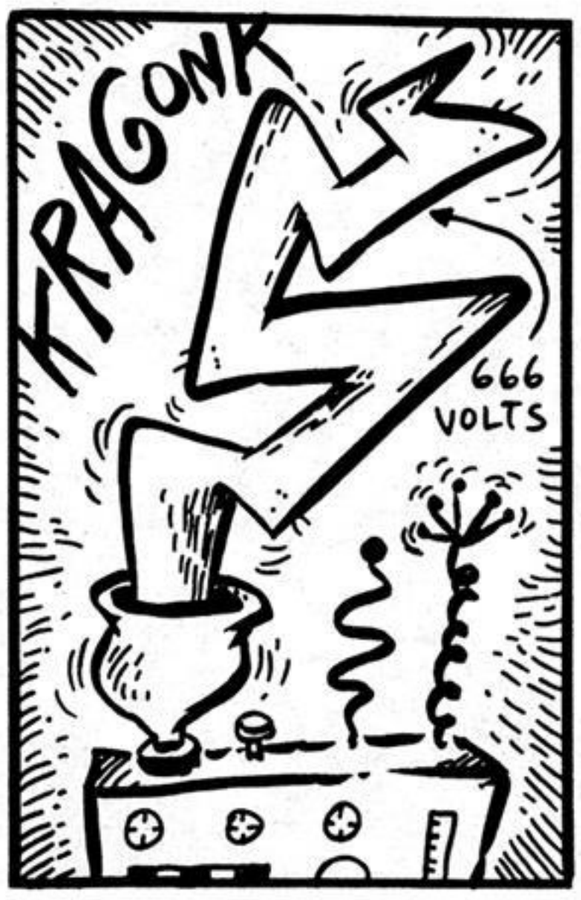

THAT'S A SWELL SIGN, MR. SAMWIDGE MAN---
Y'MEAN YOU CAN AKSHLY READ IT?
EAT

I THOUGHT ALL YA COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS WERE FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATI----
EAT

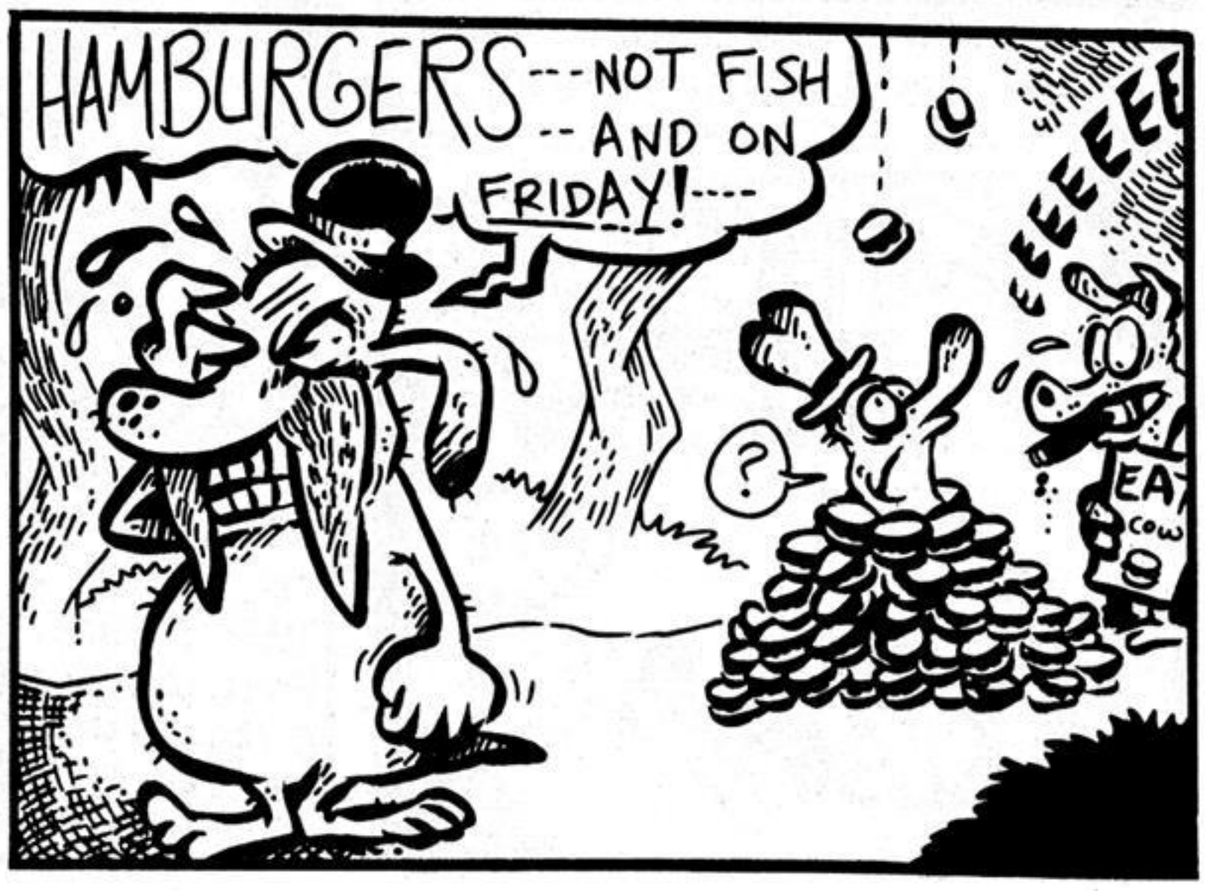
NO-NO---I'D LIKE ONE A THOSE "CRAM-BURGERS"----
EAT COW-BURGERS MM-MM


FISH CLOUD AT 3 O'CLOCK!
FLAP SWEAT

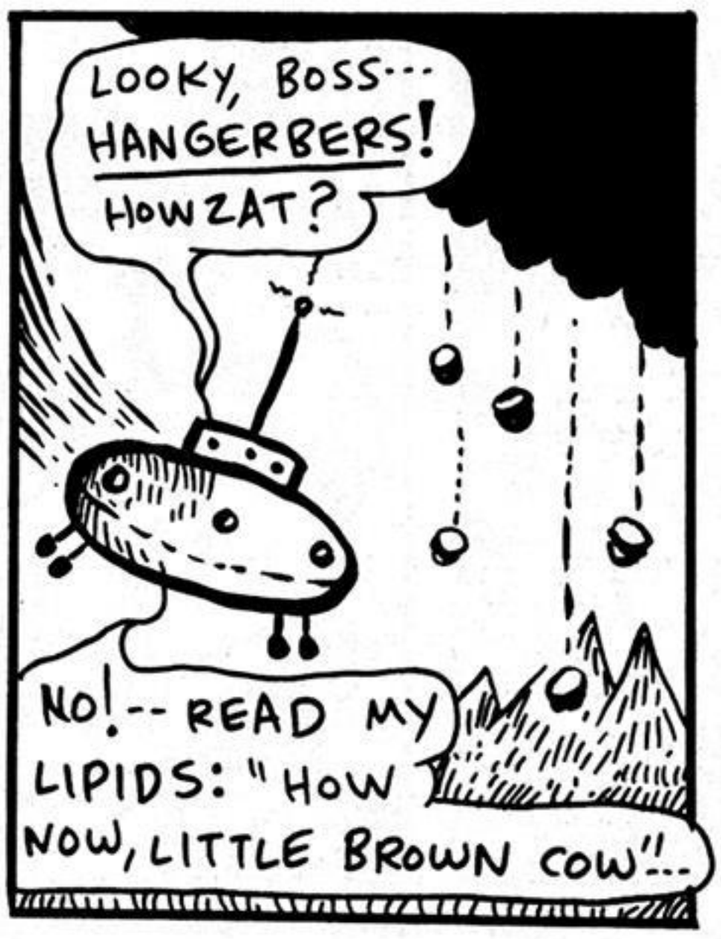
SPINCH


KRAGONK
666 VOLTS

SHRIKKK


HAMBURGERS---NOT FISH--AND ON FRIDAY!----
?
EEEEEEE
EAT COW

GEEZ--- THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN WUNNA THEM UP CLOSE!
COLD SWEAT
EAT


LOOKY, BOSS--- HANGERBERS! HOWZAT?
NO!-- READ MY LIPIDS: "HOW NOW, LITTLE BROWN COW"!--

WE'RE GONNA DO THE BOVINE THING--- WHAT WE SEEK IS A GENTLER, KINDER KIND OF KINE----
UNDERSTAND?

HEY, COUSIN--- DID YOU SEE THAT BURGER CLOUDBURST?
YEAH--- NO WIENIES THOUGH---

I WONDER IF IT COULD HAVE BEEN A SIGN?
FROM WHO? HOTT DOGGOTH? HAR!
WHERE YA GOIN' WIT DAT?

DON'T MENTION THAT DIRTY DEITY TO ME---"W NISM" IS A RIDICULOUS RELIGION--
I CAUGHT IT FAIR AND SQUARE--- I'M TAKIN' IT HOME TO MAKE SAUSAGES OUT OF---
OH NO YA DON'T!
---NO---I THINK IT WAS A SIGN FROM OUR OUTER SPACE ANCESTORS, THE SKOGNORTVEEGIANS----
HE'S A SUSPECT!
HEY!
GI'ME!
23,000,000 YEARS AGO THEY DEPOSITED ARCHAEOPTERYX EGGS ON EARTH AS AN EXPERIMENT IN GENETIC ENGINEERING---
MINE!
MINE!
GRNT
NOW--(IF I READ THE SIGNS RIGHT)---
THEY HAVE RETURNED TO PLUCK THE FINEST FRUIT OF EVOLUTION TO DATE!
BLAP
GOT IT!
IF YOU DON'T GI'ME DAT T'ING I'LL SQUEEZE YER BODY WIT' MY BEAR HANDS UNTIL THE BIRD JUICE SQUIRTS OUT!
CRIME DOES NOT PAY---
GLP--
I PROMISE I'LL BE KINDER, GENTLER--- CURTAIL MY CARNIVOROUS CARNAGE!
SNAP
A WIGGLING WIENER!
GRRRRRRRRRRRRAARRGH!
MM-MM
AHWAP

MEBBE I SHOULD GO ON A DIET----

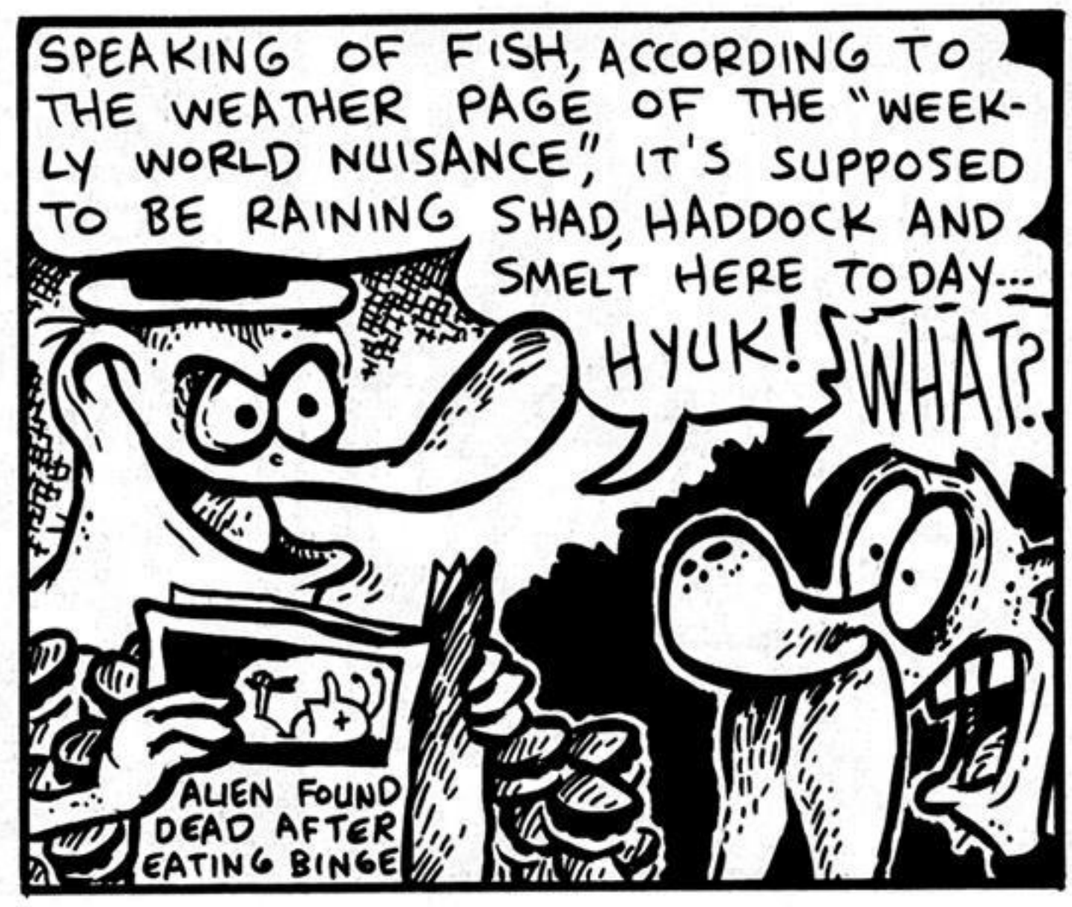
I'M GONNA TAKE IT BEFORE JUDGE WHOPPER TO BE ARRAIGNED----
DID YOU SEE ARRAIGN OF COW-BURGERS?
ICE-BOX INSURANCE, MA'AM, WILL----
G.E.

AH!---BRANDISHING YOUR BAT AGAIN! --CEASE, SIR, YOUR VIOLENT VULGARISM--- LEARN, I SAY---
--LEARN TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE!

TELL IT TO THE SPWINCHOSAURUS!
GUH

I WONDER IF THOSE ARE RILLY COW-BURGERS---
I DUNNO--- THIS TASTES LIKE A WORLD-
FAMOUS "FUNGUS-BURGER"
FUFF..
TOINK

IE., I CAN BARELY CHOKE IT DOWN----
GLP
BAW!--THAT WAS A STRIATED BITUMINOUS CUMULUS CLUSTER--- IT HAD "FISH" WRITTEN ALL OVER IT---
MANNA FROM HEAVEN!--YO' MY PTOMAINE MANNA!
?


SPEAKING OF FISH, ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER PAGE OF THE "WEEKLY WORLD NUISANCE", IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE RAINING SHAD, HADDOCK AND SMELT HERE TODAY---
HYUK!
WHAT?
ALIEN FOUND DEAD AFTER EATING BINGE

WHAT TIME?
1700 HOURS---
HOO
THIS THING IS ONLY GOOD TO WRAP FISH IN----

THAT'S IN FIVE MINUTES!
BLADDER STATIONS!

ZOINK

GIT AWAY FROM ME, YOU UGLY @★卐ξ!!

BLOONK

AWRIGHT, MAC---YER UNDER ARREST FOR BLOONKING AN ENDANGERED SPECIES----

B-BUT, RANGER RIP--IT WAS TRYIN' TO EAT ME----
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY---

RUMBLE
BESIDES, WE SHOULD GIT INDOORS--- THE WEATHERMONGER ON T.V. PREDICTED A HUGE SHOWER OF SHAD TODAY---
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY---

KYAGH!
THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL---

FWAPP

I DID IT! I DID IT!

THOSE WHO CAN DO----- THOSE WHO CAN'T, DOODLE!

FISH FALLING!---BUT IS IT A SIGN?--I WANT A SIGN---A SIGN!

KLUNK
NO FISHING

JUDGE WHOPPER!

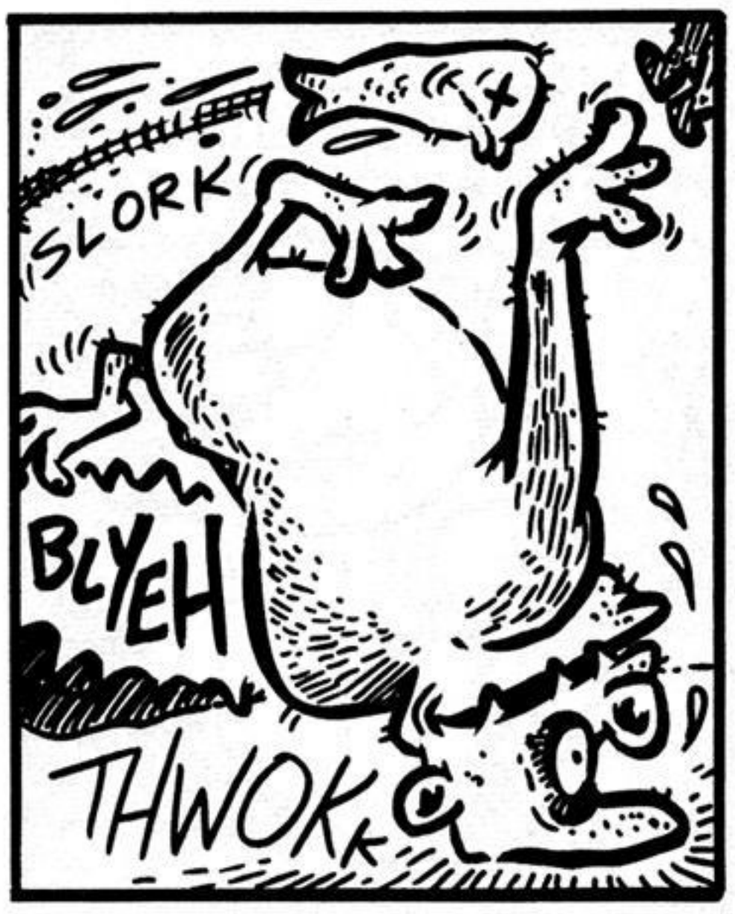
JUDGE---KIN YOU ISSUE A WARRANT FOR THIS?
WHAT WAS THE BRAT DOIN'-- SMOKING IN PUBLIC?

NO, HE WAS---
OH, SPARE ME THE SORDID DETAILS --HERE'S YER WARRANT

LOUSY, STINKIN' WEATHER---
--I WISH THE SUPREME QUART WOULD RULE AGAINST IT---

HUH--WHAT THE--WHERE THE @★☺!! AM I?
MOM
ALL-BALL R.I.P.

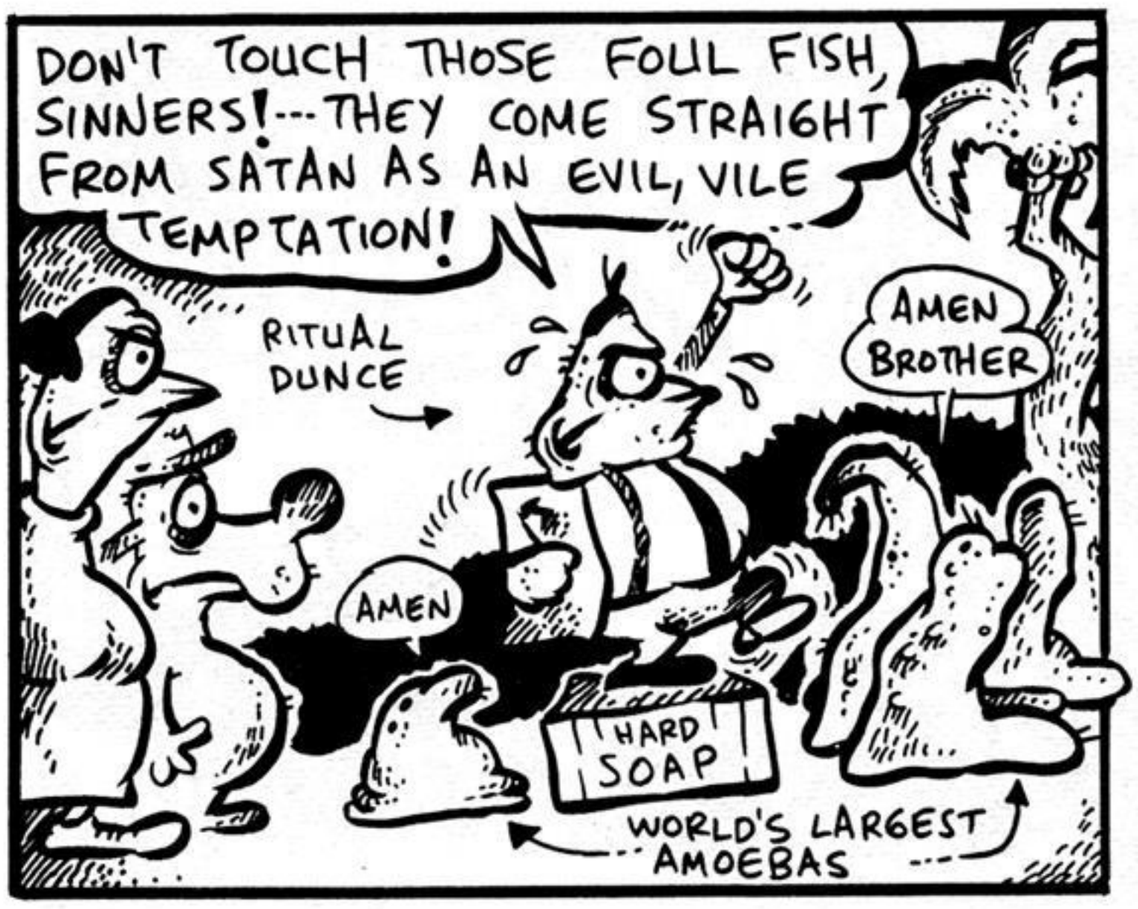
NEVER FEAR--THE LOVELY, LETHAL ARM OF THE LAWFUL, LEGAL LAW HAS YOU NOW--
HYAR HYAR HYA


SLORK
BLYEH
THWOKK

YES, DISCIPLES---YOU CAN THANK ME FOR THIS FEAST OF FISH--- I HAVE INTERCEDED WITH HOTT DOGGOTH----
SOFT SOAP

KEEP THE CONTER-BUTIONS COMING IN AND YOU'LL BE SEEING MORE AND BIGGER AND BETTER MIRACLES--- PRAISE WIENIE!
FREDDY KRUGGERAND

OBSERVE!---THE SHAMAN! THE MYSTICAL ORACLE!--- INTERPRETER OF THE MYTHICAL REALITY!---
NOW, FOR $5000 YOU CAN GET THE "BRATWURST BRIDGE" INTO SAU-SAGE SUBLIM-ITY---


DON'T TOUCH THOSE FOUL FISH, SINNERS!---THEY COME STRAIGHT FROM SATAN AS AN EVIL, VILE TEMPTATION!
RITUAL DUNCE
AMEN BROTHER
AMEN
HARD SOAP
WORLD'S LARGEST AMOEBAS

IT PROVES THAT THOSE WIENIE CULTISTS ARE MANIPULA TING THE WEATHER!

OH, WHAT A LIBELOUS, LICHEN-LIKE LIAR!!

FISH IT RAINS--- HAMBURGERS, LARSON'S LARD, LOCUST LARVAE, LOCOFOCOS---

--TEDDY BEARS---

--SO WHY DOESN'T IT RAIN HOT DOGS? --- OR HAIR TONIC--?

THAT DIRTY DINOSAUR MOLESTER MUSTA FWAPPED ME WITH THIS AN' RAN OFF!

WELL--AT LEAST I PROTECTED THE SPWINCHOSAURUS---

WELL, I HOPE YER HAPPY, MR. DORK "BILL" PLATYPUS----

--THAT STINKIN' DONUT COULDN'T EVEN PROTECT THE TUBE FROM FALLING SARDINES--- MUSTARD SAUCE ALL OVER IT--------

--AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF PILL PHONIHOO!

---WHAT GOOD IS THE ★✿§✱- THING IF IT CAN'T EVEN SAVE US FROM RANCID RAIN---

--BUT--

FWIT

STUFFED OWL

...PRODUCT PLACEMENT

SH---

Y'SEE, THE "MILITARY-DONUT" COMPLEX HAS---

DATA PALM

GUH!

RUN FOR YER LIFE!

--IT'S ONE OF B.F. MULESKINNER'S NUT-NABBERS---
NIX--NIX-- I'VE RETIRED---
EVER SINCE THIS S.D.I. THING MY "GIGANTIC UNIVERSAL DONUT" STOCK HAS SOARED---AND NOW THAT IT'S LAUNCHED---HA!
SWELL-- SAY-----
YA S'POSE I COULD BORROW---
YER A MEMBER OF THE "MILITARY-DONUT COMPLEX," YOU DIRTY------
ZISH
SKWEEEEEEEEEEENG---
ZWAP
SANCTA MARIA!
FLIOP
TUB'S EATERY
SPLAP
I QUIT, TUB!
WHAT?
EAT COW-BURGERS
MM-MM
I CAME WIT'N DIS CLOSE A BEIN' HIT BY A PILE A COW-BURGERS--- BEIN' A SAMWITCH MAN IS ONE T'ING
---BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SAMWITCH---
YER GITTIN' TOO MUCH IMAGINATION--- YER WASHED UP AS A COW----
COFFEE, TUB--- I'M GONNA TIE ONE ON!
HOW ABOUT SOME A THIS LUSCIOUS LEECH STEW---?
SQUID
LEMUR BEANS
NO THANKS--IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE READY YET----
GYOK
MUSH-ROOM

WHAT'D YA THINK OF THE "FISH RAIN"?
AH, I DON'T B'LIEVE IN THAT STUFF---
PIG SNOUT SOUFFLE $3.50
B-BUT--- DIDN'T YA SEE IT?
I DUNNO---
I DON'T RECALL---
--TOO CONTRO-VERTICAL-
--I'M WAITING FOR THE AU-THORITIES TO ISSUE A STATEMENT--

IT'S NOT FAIR--I'M TOO YOUNG AND CUTE TO BE TREATED LIKE THIS---
SNORF
SOMEBODY GONNA PAY!
LOOK, BERT----ONE A THOSE CUTE LITTLE BEARS---
AW---HOW KYOOT!
--HERE'S A MULCH-MELLOW, LITTLE GUY-----
HE LIKES IT--ID'NAT CUTE?

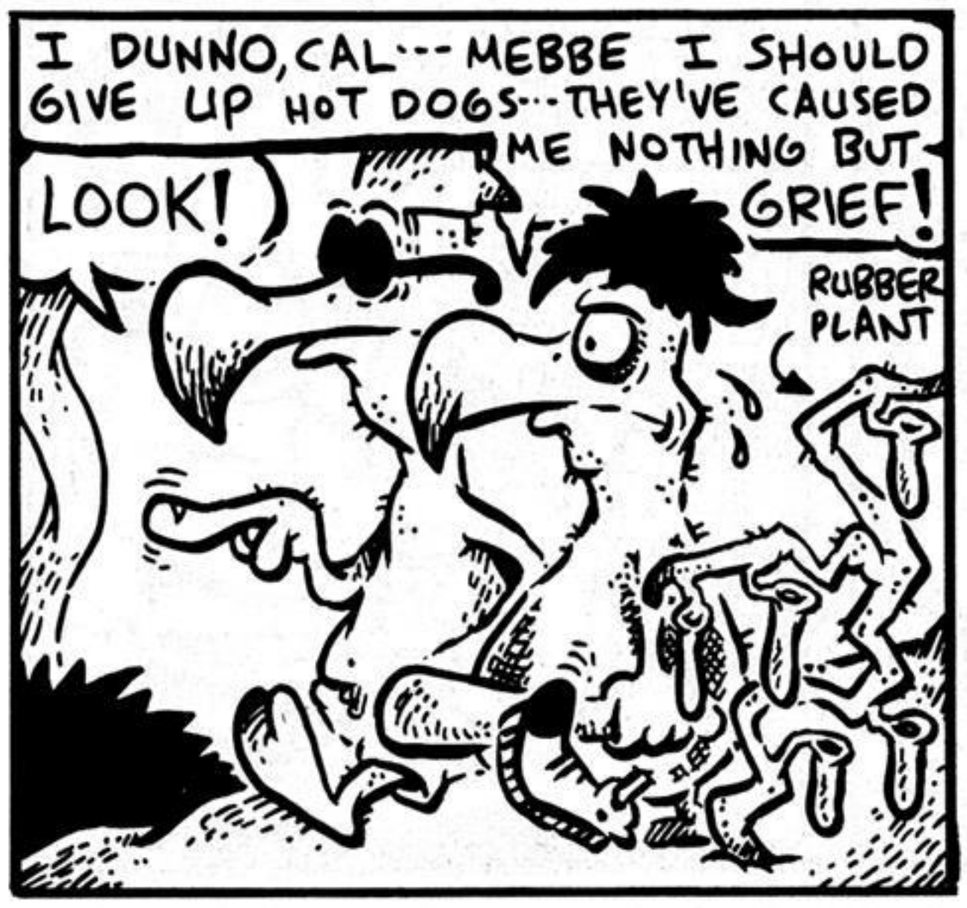
YOU KNOW HOW I RETAIN MY ETERNAL CUTENESS AND BEARISH GOOD LOOKS?
NOPE--
HOW?
I SPEND AN HOUR A DAY IN AN "ORGONE ACCUMULATOR" ---IT JUST DOES WONDERS FOR A BOY'S BOD---
SWELL, BUDDY--- HAVE ANOTHER MASH-MILLARD---
WAIT-
FLEX
HOW CAN I GIT INTO THIS THING?
OH--IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE---

DAM THE EXPENSE! WE'RE AMERICANS!
YEAH--HYUK HYUK--
VERY WELL--- FOLLOW ME-----
---SO THE DONUT WORKS--HA!--I KNEW IT--- OUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF BILLIONS YET UNBORN AND UNABORTED WILL BE STENCHENED BY THE NEW BREEZE THAT BLITS THE BLOOP----
LABRAYA MUD POTS
BARNEY STONE
ORNATE ORCHID

KOONG

SPLOOP

LABRAYA MUD POTS
MM--- GOOD MUD----


I DUNNO, CAL--- MEBBE I SHOULD GIVE UP HOT DOGS--- THEY'VE CAUSED ME NOTHING BUT GRIEF!
LOOK!
RUBBER PLANT

IS THAT A SIGN?

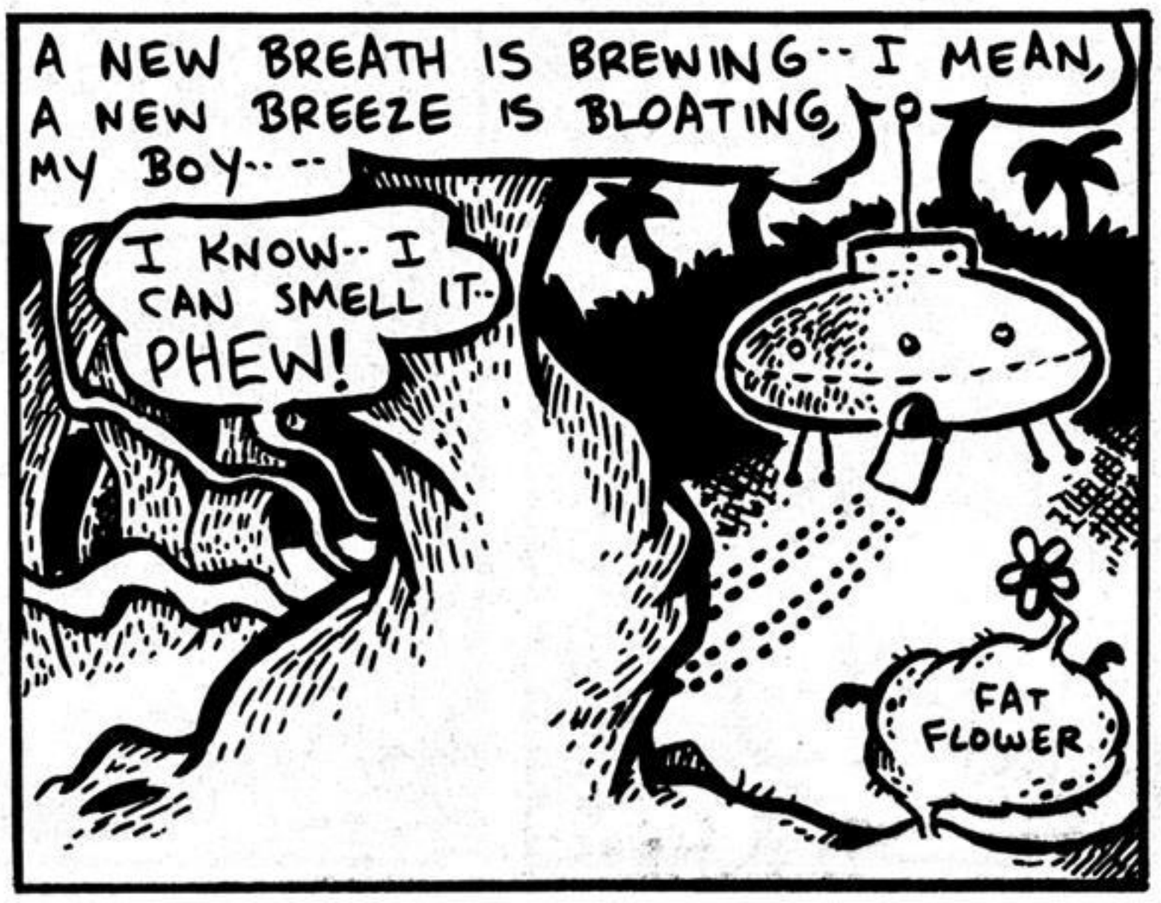
ULP
ACTUALLY IT LOOKS MORE LIKE THE BLOATED CADAVER OF ONE OF THE LOCALS----

IT'S ALIVE!
GLORP

MG NK NKNM MGNK
KMKMP FGG---GG
NKMKK GMK NK
KGD NKNN
KGG PKNG!
CAN'T HEAR YOU--- YOU'VE GOTTA MOUTH FULLA MUD!

GULK----

I SAID: "MUD IS NATURE'S MOST COMPLETE FOOD! IT'S DELICIOUS, NUTRICIOUS, AND JUST PENNIES PER SERVING!"
GEEZ--
PLOP

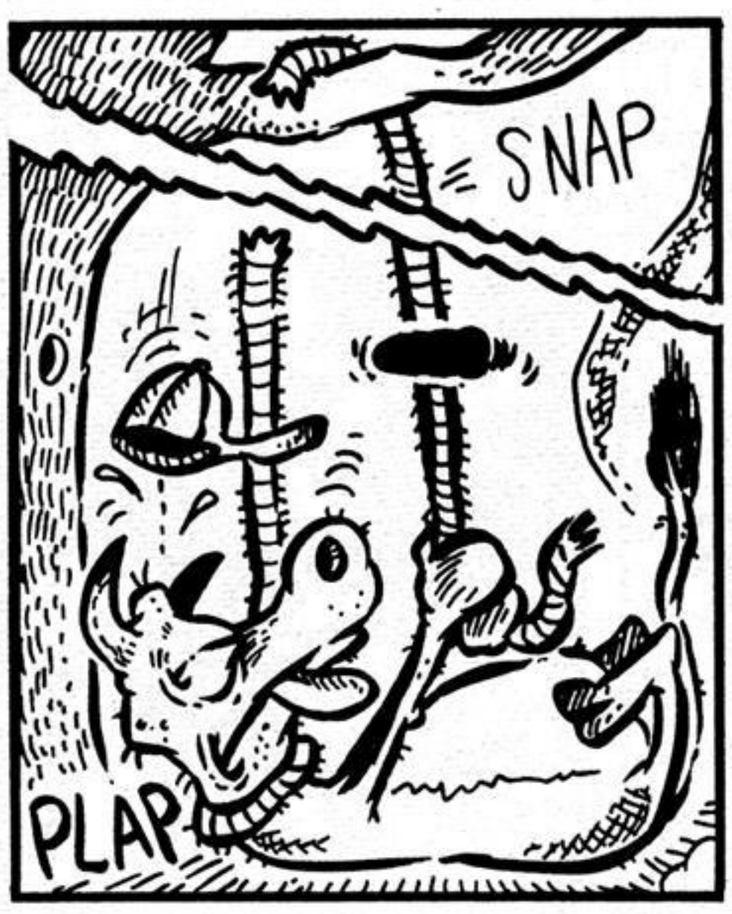

A NEW BREATH IS BREWING-- I MEAN, A NEW BREEZE IS BLOATING, MY BOY----
I KNOW-- I CAN SMELL IT-- PHEW!
FAT FLOWER

--YEAH, D.T.---IT REEKS LIKE DEEP MOO-MOO DOO-DOO!
--AND IF IT REEKS LIKE A COW AND LEEKS LIKE A COW----

---IT PROLLY IS A COW--- LOOK!
TRYING TO LYNCH HIMSELF!

BUT WHY--WHY?
BETTER LYNCHED THAN LUNCHED
---KOONK

QUICK--- CUT 'IM DOWN!
ZETZ


SNAP
PLAP

NOW WE GOTTA MOOTILATE THIS MOO-COW--
I'VE NEVER BEEN ON A MUTILATION MISSION BEFORE--

ME NEITHER---I JUST CAN'T GET OVER THE WONDERFULNESS OF IT ALL--GAWRSH---
GEE---
--BUT HERE GOES--

HEY!---WUSS GOIN' ON HERE?
YOU GOT A LICENSE TA DO DAT?
SHOULD I "ZETZ" 'IM, BOSS?
NO--REMEMBER WE MUST BE KINDER, GENTLER---

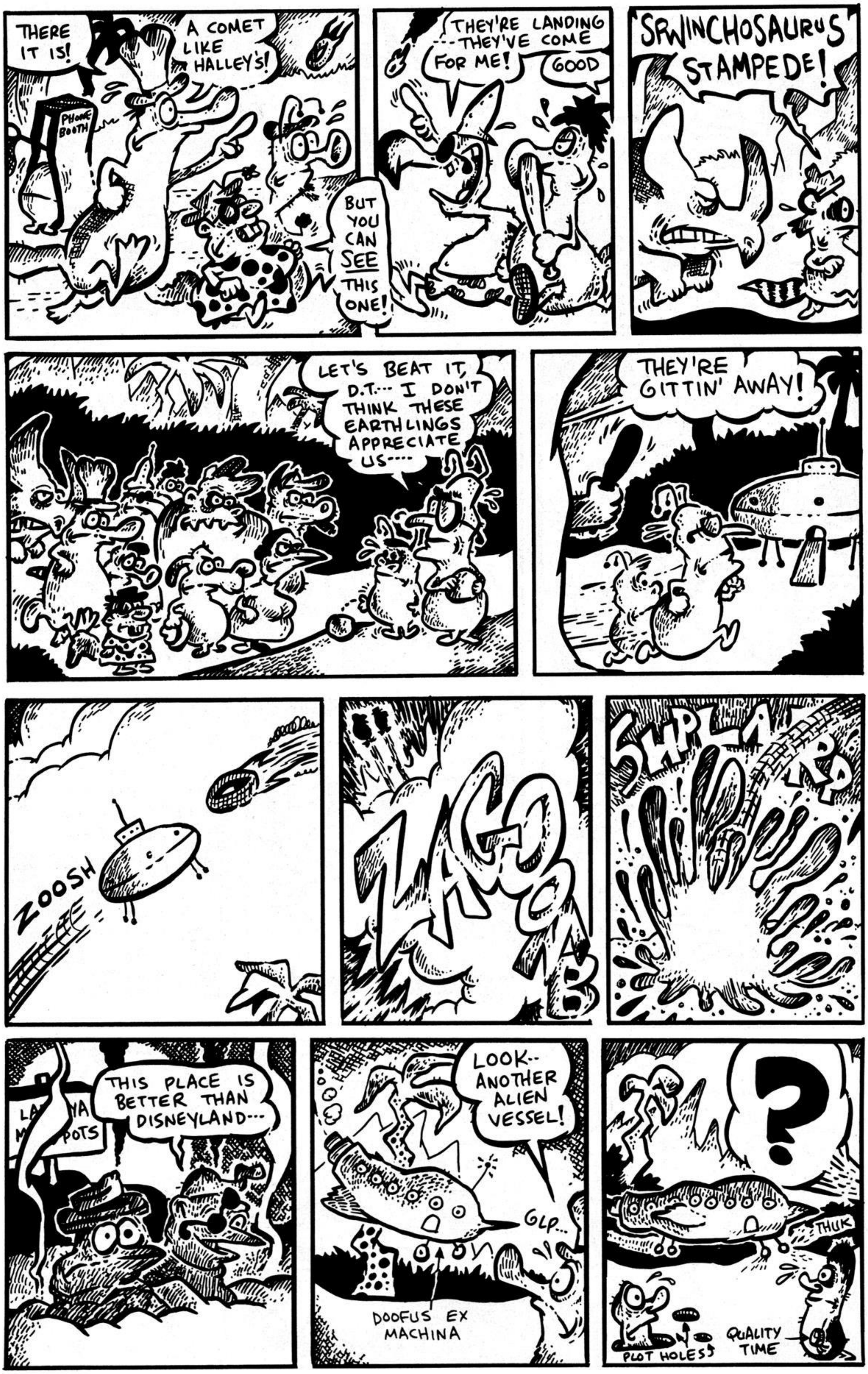
JUST PELT 'IM WITH ROCKS----

NOW WHO ARE YOU PICKING ON?
THESE MUTANT MOO-MOO MUTILATORS---
ZOINIST OINK-OINK
BLAP

THEY---
YOU'RE JUST BEATING THEM UP 'CAUSE THEY'RE DIFFERENT
OW-

YEAH--- THEY THROW ROCKS LEFT-HANDED----
WAIT!
HOW GAUCHE!
THEY MAY BE FRIENDLY ALIENS--- JUST SCARED--- LET ME TRY A LITTLE EARTHLING GOOD WILL ON 'EM----
?
PARDON ME, GENTLEMEN--- IS YOUR FLYING SAUCER INSURED AGAINST METEOR COLLISIONS AND CHALDORCHIAN RIVET-EATERS ?
YOU!
ME?
GURU GUGGENHEIM!---- HEAD CULTIST TO THE EVIL GOD "HOTT DOGGOTH"---
YEAH---
--AND JUST WHOM ARE YOU WORSHIPPING THESE DAYS? THE GREAT GOD PANSY?
THE SKOG-NORT-VEEGIANS
BIRDS FROM OUTER SPACE!
YOU PUTZ!
WHAT KINDA MONEY IS THERE IN THAT?
HYAR
GRRR
AAAAARK!!
ULK
RELIGIOUS DISPUTE
--ARE YOU SURE THIS IS AN "ORGAN ASSIMILATOR"? IT SEEMS MORE LIKE AN OLD, BEAT-UP TIRE----
EXACTLY---
----JUST THE THING TO ATTRACT A BIG, FAT WAD OF COSMIC ENERGY-- READY?
GULP-- I GUESS SO---
LET'S GO!
T.N.T.

POK
KA-LOOM
QUITE A BIG BATCH OF COSMETIC ENERGY, EH BERT?
HI-- I'M BACK-- DID YOU SEE ME ON "PHONIHOO"?
YEAH--YOU LOOK MORE REALISTIC ON T.V.---
SAY--
AIN'T YOU THE DONUT DENOUNCER ---THE S.D.I. SNIPER?
YEAH-- WANNA BUY A COPY OF MY BOOK?
DANCING TOWARD THE LIGHT AT THE OTHER END OF THE DONUT HOLE
I'M GONNA NAB ME ONE MORE NUT----
GRRRRR-
FOR ALL LANGZINE!
NOT AGAIN--
BILL!---YOU B'LIEVE IN "FISH RAIN", DONCHA, HUH? DONCHA? HUH?
WELL----
69TH CUPPA COFFEE
I'M NOT SURE---I'M WAITIN' FOR GRINNY TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE
GNT..
CHARIOT OF THE GODS!
SMELLS MORE LIKE A GARBAGE TRUCK---
HOLY SHINOLA!
THE S.D.I. DONUT!--GOING DOWN IN FLAMES!
SKREEEEK
I GOTTA CALL MY BROKER AND DUMP MY G.U.D. STOCK--- FAST!


THERE IT IS!
A COMET LIKE HALLEY'S!
PHONE BOOTH
BUT YOU CAN SEE THIS ONE!
THEY'RE LANDING --- THEY'VE COME FOR ME!
GOOD
SPWINCHOSAURUS STAMPEDE!
LET'S BEAT IT, D.T.... I DON'T THINK THESE EARTHLINGS APPRECIATE US....
THEY'RE GITTIN' AWAY!
ZOOSH
SHP
THIS PLACE IS BETTER THAN DISNEYLAND...
POTS
LOOK-- ANOTHER ALIEN VESSEL!
GLP...
DOOFUS EX MACHINA
?
THUK
PLOT HOLES
QUALITY TIME

I APPRECIATE THE FIREWORKS DISPLAY AND THE CROWD HERE TO GREET ME, BUT IT WASN'T NECESSARY... I'M ONLY HERE TO GO FISHING!
GRINNY!
SECRETE SERVICE AGENT
--SO!--- THEY'LL ONLY TAKE HIS WORD FOR IT-- O.K.-- I'LL SHOW 'EM--
BURROWING BURRITO
PLOINK
KRoX!
FLOOMP
TUG-- TUG--
VICE SQUID
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT'S RAINING FISH!
CLONE SHARK
---MAYBE--
MR. PRESIDENT, AN ALIEN INVASION---
MR. PRESIDENT, THE DONUT HAS CRASHED
BOYS, BOYS---
NO ALIEN FLYING SAUCER COULD GIT PAST THE S.D.I. DONUT, WHICH IS STILL ORBITING SERENELY OVERHEAD---
SEE?
YEEK!---AND I JUST UNLOADED ALL MY STOCK---
SPUT-- SPLUT--
I DID IT AND I'M GLAD!
SPLAT
©1989 K.ROTHWEILER
END

[From "LETTERS," inside front cover]

Dear *Critters*,

I've been buying *Critters* regularly since #28.

"The Blue Beagle," "Fission Chicken," "Lionheart," "Captain Jack," "Fontain the Fox," and "Hyper Al" are really great.

Everything else isn't.

How's that for diplomatic?

Kevin Miller
Elmhurst, IL

● *"My favorite readers this month are..." No, I don't have the heart.* —*KT*

An illustrated letter from Charles E. Roe (an enlightened soul).

Hello there,

I'm having a problem with *Critters*, lately, especially with three of the main features: "Fission Chicken," "Blue Beagle," and "Lionheart." Tim Fuller's artwork is brilliant, J.P. Morgan's is ferociously on target, but...

But I, for one, am a bit fed up with the "parody only" diet, fed up with the "Disney Is Alive" and "Ollie North Is a Fink" plots we've been deluged with recently, especially since their treatment is every time extremely similar.

Non-interference from the editor is to be applauded, up to a point: certainly, a minimum of editing could prevent such redundancies.

Parody is nice. But balance is better.

I'm sure Tim Fuller can do a smashing story without the crutch of yesterday's media flash-in-the-pan.

Otherwise, *Critters* is fun, the "Tails from the Darkside" series starts up great, and William Van Horn is a consistent pleasure.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick Marcel
Etaples, France

● *You're right, Patrick, and the terrible trio of Tom, Tim, and J.P. have since readjusted their sights. Look on it as a brief planetary alignment of similar sensibilities; the tides were a bit rough, but we're over them now.* —*KT*

Dear *Critters*,

I know it's going to sound a little lame this late in the game, but—*Critters* is just fabulous! It's a long story, and here it is...

I'm twenty...I knocked off buying comics about ten years ago when they hit forty cents (forty cents!! If only...). Then last summer my buddy Brad took our mob down to the Comic Den, and I re-acquired the habit.

In September I picked up my first copy of *The Dreamery*, which led me to *Fusion* around November. I was already a fan of anthropomorphs, and so I picked up *Albedo*. The two convinced me that Steve Gallacci was an artist and writer whose work was worth following. Terry, my dealer, pointed me toward "Birthright" in *Critters*. I picked up #2, which set me back $5—first time I've ever risked that much on a first exposure. At first, the only thing I liked was "Birthright" (the rest I figured you could file in the round cabinet). But I made up my mind to collect at least those issues.

So I started picking them up. But the more I read, the more I liked. "Usagi" was the next thing I clued into. I dedided to collect the set. So I cashed in all my *Dredds, Yummy Furs, Space Beavers*, and grossed enough to pick up some major collecting. As of today I'm missing #4 and some of the 20s, but otherwise—wowee!

As of last night, I'm just getting into "Gnuff"—I'm about up to the "Orva" episodes—and the whole thing's looking great. "Lionheart," too, looks like a lot of fun. "Fission Chicken" is fun, too—that frame where Kikbak and Selmor pop their heads and make an escape looks straight outta *Yellow Submarine*! One of the best things about your 'zine is how it features new stuff all the time. Sorta like the *Tonight Show* for us anthrophile comic readers.

The editorials are warm and *Critters* wouldn't be the same without 'em...or the answers to inquiries in the letters—at least we know you read your mail and don't just print it! The letters prove you have an intelligent, caring readership, and I'm happy—and honored—to join them!

I'm gonna ask it. Any chance Steve G. has a "Birthright III" in the works? I'd like to know what happened to Alfon, Andre, and Jenna. God knows, they deserve better than to be stranded between worlds—as they have been, apparently, *for over a year now*. And if that bugs me, what about the people who've been following it from day 1?

One last thing before I go, folks. The title—*Critters*—yeah, it gives it all away, but, I mean, well, isn't it a bit derogatory? If you called Alfon a critter, you'd probably get a narrow stare and cold reply—doing likewise to Usagi could be fatal! You people are playing with ethnic dynamite! But then, I guess we're all critters...

Yours sincerely,

Todd G. Sutherland
Mississauga, Ontario

● *You sold your* Yummy Furs*? I'm touched... Yeah, I used to have argu-*

ments with people about the negative connotations to the word "critters" (Josh Quagmire expressed reservations about it, as I recall) but it hardly comes up any more. Anyway, the title's really tiny now.

Oh, didn't I mention this before? "Birthright III" starts in #47, on sale in October. —*KT*

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Critters #34-37 were great, but I'm saddened by fact that you're ditching the good ol' anthology format. I can't believe it. . .after all these years. . .oh well! I just hope that the change won't affect "Birthright III" in any bad manner. [*See previous answer.* —*KT*]

The covers: Although #34's was extremely well done, #35's by Lela Dowling was the most remarkable. #36's was pretty cool, and #37's was so-so (Mike's done better). A job well-done, people!

The innards: #34's "Dognet" was perfect. I can't get over Tim Fuller's Quax Bedroom, and Robohop was badass! "Tails From the Darkside" was the best! Great art, great story. . .I wanna see more! "Duck 'Bill' Platypus": I'll get to that in a moment.

#35's "Fission Chicken" story was classic. I can't wait for that full-issue F.C. story. "Lionheart" was superb (as always). I hope to see a collected book in the future. "Smokey Goes Legit" was also enjoyable. "Duck 'Bill'": Hold yer horses.

#36's "Lionheart" was a great follow-up to the first chapter and was even better!! I still want that "Lionheart" book. "D.'B.'P.": Just a second. "Fission Chicken" was excellent in every way; but I liked the first part more.

#37's "Hyper Al" story was good and all, but Mike can do better than this. I was a bit disappointed. . .but the conclusion to "Lionheart" totally made up for it. Word, it was def!

And now the bad news: "Duck 'Bill' Platypus." WHY?!! Why did you do it?!! This is bogus entertainment. I did not one bit understand this comic. I never want to see this complete waste of paper again. I'm sorry if I sound too criticizing, but this type of useless horse waste doesn't belong in *Critters*. "Lionheart," "Fission Chicken," "Blue Beagle," "SpeakingStone," "Usagi Yojimbo" (hi Stan!), "Captain Jack," "Birthright," "Gnuff," "Nilson Groundthumper," "Angst," "Lizards". . .they all belong in *Critters*. What did we do to deserve this? I gave the strip a chance with the first story, but after that, it started to get *really* annoying. A platypus that I *wouldn't* mind seeing again is Digger Duckbill.

Despite this and your dumping the anthology, I'll still read *Critters*. I have to admit it. . .I'm hooked.

Todd Bustillo
Cypressville, CA

● *I just want to see the expression on Todd's face when he realizes I printed his letter in the "Duck 'Bill' Platypus" issue just so he'd have to buy it. Anyway, Todd, take a gander at the next letter. . .* —*KT*

Dear Mr. Thompson,

At first, I disliked "Duck 'Bill' Platypus," but it grows on you. I have liked everything else at first glance, so keep it up. All I can say is that Kyle Rothweiler is deeply, deeply weird.

I used to read a title called *Morphs*, by GraphXpress, but I haven't seen it for a while and am afraid it has gone to its reward. If this is so, why not put some of the works it featured into *Critters*? After all, *Morphs* had its share of the Strange and Twisted in only three issues.

Regarding the Dearth of Serious Animals, maybe it's due to some fundamental psychological effect that forces the Artists to try to be funny. I mean, serious strips have all sorts of grief and pain in them, the artists must like their characters (or why draw them) and thus serious strips force artists to put characters they like through said grief and pain. No wonder most of the Animals are funny!

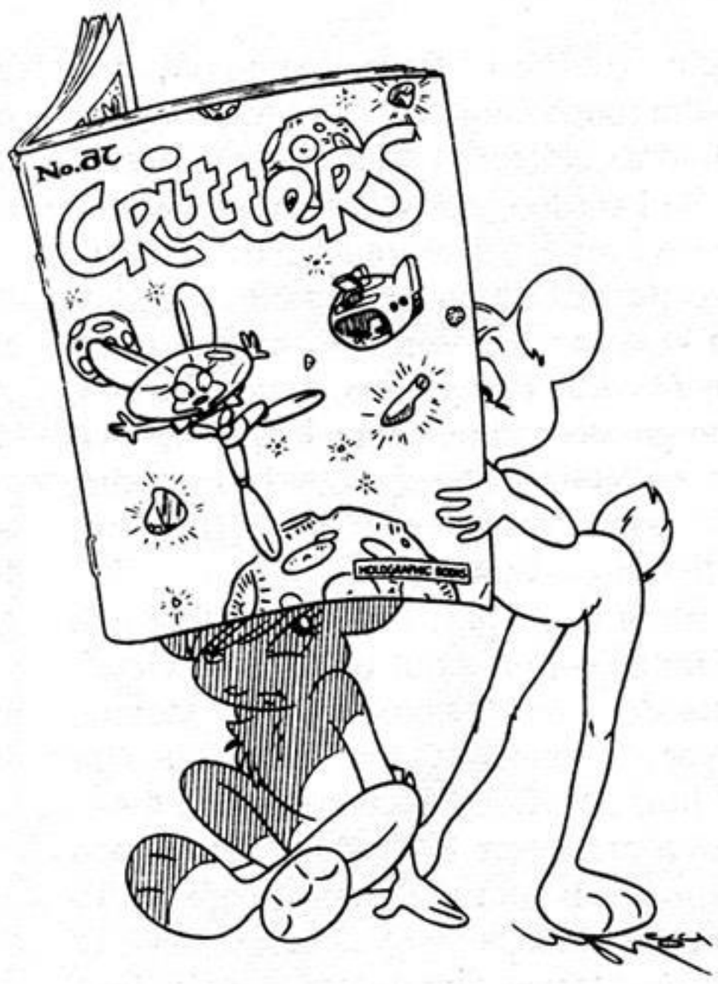
Well, I'll end this letter so you can open some missives from slobbering fanboys. (I'm too old to be a fan-boy, being 27.)

Live Long and Prosper.
(Yes, I'm one of *those*, too.)

Charles E. Roe
San Angelo, TX

● *Hey,* Morphs *is still alive and kicking—it's just a little off schedule. Okay, a lot off schedule. What can I say—they can't all be bears on scheduling like I am. Issue #5, which features work by part-time Fantagraphics femmes fatales Donna Barr and Mel. White among others, should be out sometime this summer, according to publisher Jim Groat.*

And if you think being in your late 20s immunizes you to Fanboy Syndrome, think again. This isn't mumps we're talking about. . .



That's it for this time. Next issue: an all-Captain Jack letters column. And don't forget to write and tell me what you've thought of the first three "solo" Critters *issues! Thanks to Taral Wayne for the above spot illo, by the way.*—*KT*

COMING NEXT ISSUE

© 1989 Mike Kazaleh

Critters #42. Captain Jack returns—well, no, he doesn't. But everyone *else* does, including Herman, Janet, and creator Mike Kazaleh—although not really Beezlebub. . . Confused yet? Don't miss *Not the Adventures of Captain Jack*!

AND, ON SALE NEXT MONTH

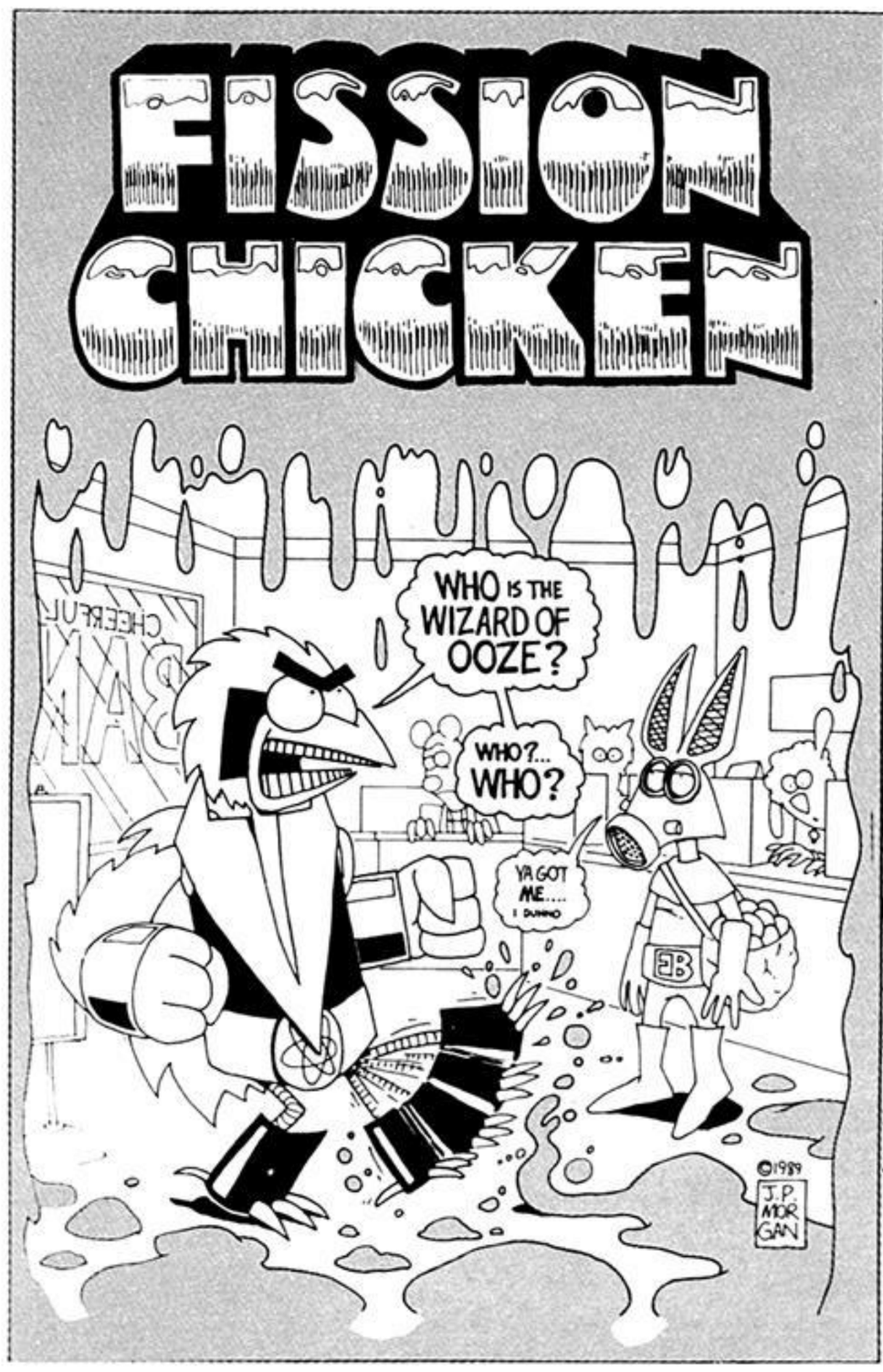
© 1989 Donna Barr

Stinz #2. Steinheld's army stint continues, courtesy the indefatigably wacky Donna Barr! *ON SALE IN EARLY JULY.*

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS proudly presents...

FISSION CHICKEN

J.P. Morgan's fighting fowl battles a bewildering array of irritating foes—and all he wants to do is be left alone!



P.U. Evolcraft, the Ether Bunny, and the sinister Vortoxians (Marketing Experts From Outer Space)—these are just a few of the enemies that make life miserable for Fission Chicken, the nuclear-powered, egg-spawned bombshell.

After a long and much-applauded career in the pages of *Critters*, Fish (as he's known to fans nationwide) explodes in the pages of his very own regular comic! Written and drawn by J.P. MORGAN, with a back-up series by Kyle Rothweiler and cover colors by Brad Foster, this comic will tickle your wishbone! (And watch out for THE FISSION CHICKEN COLLECTION VOLUME ONE this fall!)

Send me the following nifty-keeno Fission Chicken stuff:

☐ *Fission Chicken* #1 for $2.25

☐ A sub to *Fission Chicken* #1-4 for $7.00

The following issues of Fission Chicken-contaminated *Critters* for $2.25 each, except where noted:

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☐#28 ☐#30 ☐#32 ☐#33 ☐#35 ☐#36
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—GARY PANTER

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—R. CRUMB

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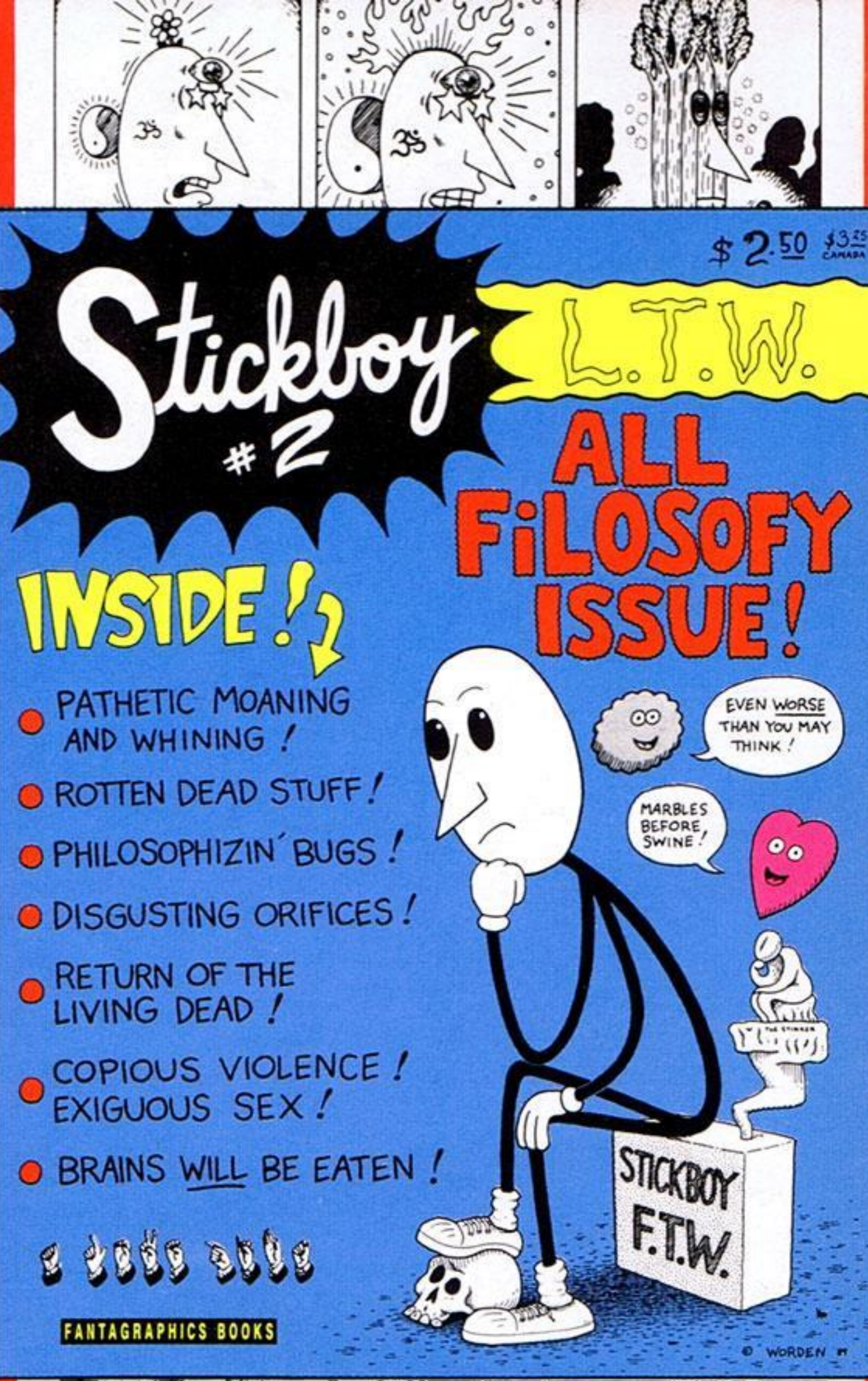

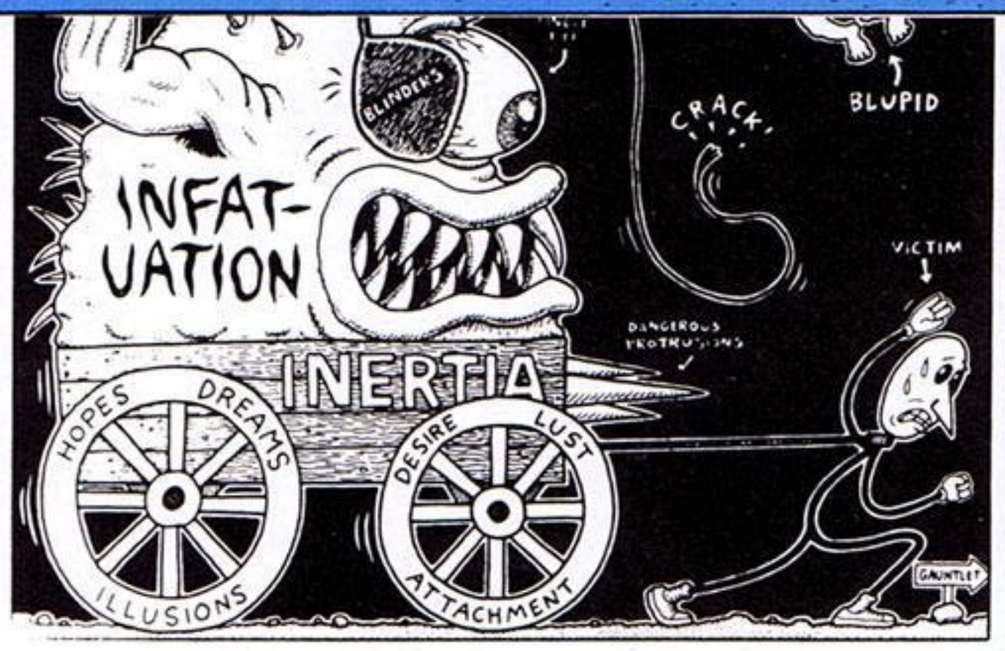

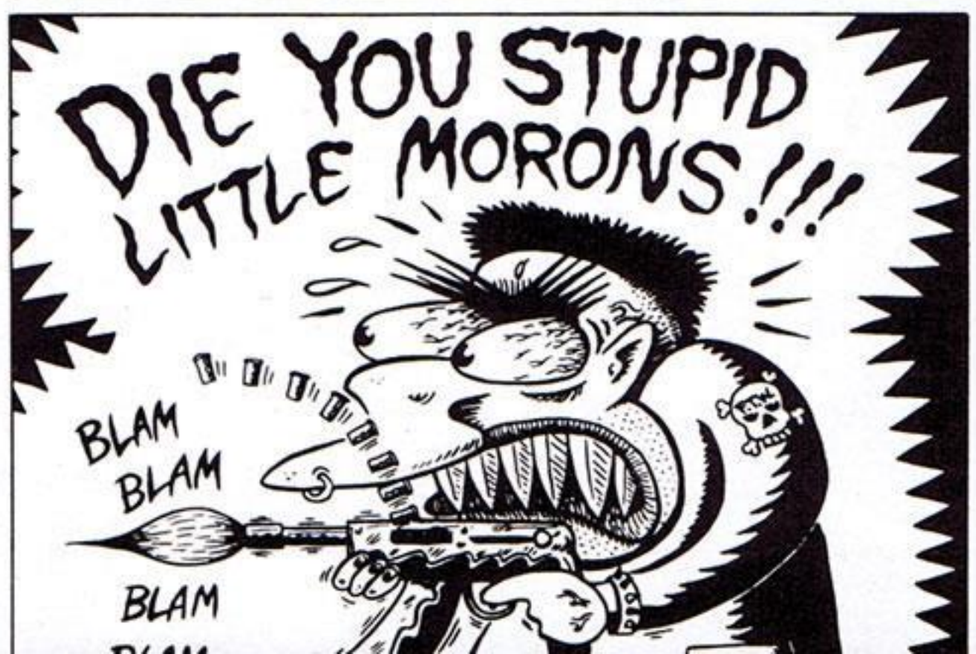

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